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CHAPTER IV

EATING AND DRINKING

Infant Feeding.

THE dietetic prejudices of any people must have their basis in their methods of infant feeding, and it is probable that the most characteristic distinctions between the Bemba attitude to food and our own are occasioned by differences in early training. Unfortunately, it is just on this aspect of Bemba nutrition that it is most difficult to collect accurate information. Babies are suckled at any hour of the day or night, whenever they cry. As they grow older, they are carried about the village on their elder sisters' backs, and seem to be given choice morsels by admiring or affectionate relatives at every hut. When food is plentiful, children under three nibble at something wherever they go. Throughout childhood it is therefore almost impossible to keep any quantitative record of diet. Certain broad facts, however, stand out in contrast to our own methods of infant feeding, and Bemba theory is interesting in this respect.

As in most other African communities, babies are suckled until they are between two and three years old. There is a strong taboo observed by all except urbanized natives on the conception of a new child before the weaning of the last. When the child is four months old, a special rite, 'the taking of the child', *ukupoko mwana*, is performed by the father and mother, and after this ceremony, *coitus interruptus* may be allowed between the parents, but it is considered very dangerous for the mother to become pregnant before her first baby has been successfully weaned. The child will fall ill of a particular disease, *ukulwale lunse*, of which the symptoms are coughing, wasting, or diarrhoea. Even in urbanized districts where the taboo is less rigidly observed, mothers are still uneasy. If a child has been hurriedly weaned to make way for a successor, and later falls ill, the parents are charged with the trouble. Neighbours shake their heads, and if the illness is fatal, whisper that the child has been killed by the mother's folly. There is no doubt that early weaning is still largely prevented by the fear of endangering the baby's life.

It is difficult to know whether the mother, at the end of this long

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621 591 611 is determined by matrilineal descent, or even in some cases by patrilineal ties, as we shall see. So that we have to deal with a primary principle of local association—matrilocal marriage and a number of secondary ones.

The Primary Group—the Matrilocal Extended Family.[1]

596 842 [591] By the rule of matrilocal marriage a man goes to live at his wife's village and works there for his father-in-law for a number of years. Thus, the aim of each man is to have as many daughters as possible since their marriage makes him head of a strong economic unit composed of his daughters, his sons-in-law, and their children. The more daughters a Bemba has the more fortunate he is considered to be. His sons leave him to go and live in their father-in-law's villages and become economically dependent on their wives' families. They move from home at betrothal (i.e. about 12 to 14 years) and remain in the village into which they have married until two or three children have been born. Even if they remove their families home later in married life it is more likely that they will go to their maternal grandfather or maternal uncle, than to their father. But a man's daughters, when they marry, build huts near his own, and if their husbands settle down happily in their wives' community, they remain there more or less permanently and form the backbone of their father-in-law's village, if he is a headman. Hence the Bemba proverb, 'A man is a granary on the veranda (i.e. a man acknowledging economic obligations but living far off) and a daughter is a granary by the door-way (i.e. a source of economic support near at hand).'[2]

596 603 Besides the advantage of the presence of his sons-in-law, a Bemba father looks forward to the arrival of grandchildren. With these he is on very intimate terms. As children they sleep in his hut and he and the grandmother play an important part in their education. In early married life the granddaughters will probably remain in his village if their parents are still resident there, and grandchildren of both sexes are welcome to return there later in life whenever they please. The children of a man's daughters are considered a very special asset, whereas the children of his sons, though treated with equal affection, usually live elsewhere. To

[1] Matrilocal marriage is still practised but its duration is gradually decreasing.
[2] *Mwaume butala pa lukungu: mwanakashi butala pa muinshi.*

(*mipashi*) mainly of the matrilineal line, which can be addressed at 769
spirit shrines, the burial places of dead chiefs or in the huts of 775
their individual descendants. They can also be born again with each new child, who acquires a *mupashi* as a guardian spirit, either from his mother's or his father's line, or from the royal dynasty of the territory in which he is born. These guardian spirits can also be inherited, and each dead man or woman is succeeded by a close relative of the same sex who acquires his or her name and guardian spirit.

(ii) *Malignant spirits*, (*fiwa*) who are the spirits of those who died with a feeling of injury because of some violent death, or who left the world with a sense of grievance. *Fiwa* return to strike their descendants with illness or misfortune.

(iii) *Living persons* who can produce good fortune by blessing 789
(*ukupala amate*), which they do chiefly by calling on the ancestral 554
spirits to which they have special right of address; or cursing, which they do through some less specified evil force. The blessings of a chief or a man in authority are particularly potent because of the great spirits such powerful persons have access to. The head of a matrilineage, or an important member of it can also bless in this way. A great social personage who has been injured or not given his due, is feared because he may withhold the blessings of the spirits, or actually pronounce curses (*ukutipa* or *ukulapishya*). The curse is specially important in relation to procreation and [604
childbirth, since the malevolent wishes of the father's sister can 842]
produce barrenness in the woman, or impotence in the man. This is described as 'the great curse'. There are, however, a number of curses which can be used by injured people, who 'throw lightning' or are said to be able to 'throw lions', or who can threaten to curse, if their property is stolen, or when specially distressed by the treatment they have received.

(*b*) Impersonal forces include (i) *Magic* in general (*bwanga*), 789
which is the force contained in the leaves, roots or barks of various 754
trees or shrubs and a number of activating agencies (*fishimba*), such as parts of animals or human beings, which can be used by the specialist magician (*yanga*) for beneficent purposes (health, the production of crops, fertility and success) or for harmful purposes (illness, death or crop failure). *Buloshi* is evil magic or

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with her, is also a danger to all the men concerned. These triple relationships are constantly mentioned in court cases and are made the subject of claims by the injured family of a dead man or woman who declare that 'their child' has been killed in that way. They recur in narratives of the rather lurid sex lives of Bemba princesses who are expected to take many lovers, but must not bring trouble on the land by simultaneous relations of this kind.

Lastly, in common with many Bantu peoples, Bemba believe that, if a man commits adultery while his wife is pregnant, the baby is born dead. He has taken the spirit of the child (*asendo umupashi wa umwana*). If the woman is unfaithful while she is pregnant, then she herself dies in childbirth unless she confesses and gets medicine in time.[1]

I have dilated on this system of attitudes and beliefs because I think it fundamental to the understanding of Bemba puberty ritual and also because it cannot fail, I think, to strike the field-worker in this area as one of the basic elements of tribal dogma. It would be impossible to live long in a Bemba village without running constantly across instances of the effects of these beliefs whether in terms of ritual or in the most practical problems of cooking, catering and entertaining. If the Bemba can be said to have an ideological obsession in the sense that they are constantly pre-occupied with one set of fears, it is this belief in the magical potency of sex, fire and blood. Such emotional attitudes set us puzzling problems. In this chapter I shall confine myself to stating them. Later in the book I hope at least to suggest some hypotheses which may stimulate comparative research in other tribes holding similar beliefs.

To recapitulate, Bemba dogma stresses the role of the ancestors in determining human fortunes as well as the power of injured spirits, who revenge the injustices they suffered on earth on the

[1] It will be seen from the above that the causes of barrenness or death in childbirth are numerous among the Bemba. Barrenness may be due to the special curse of the father's sister; to an injured spirit returning to punish a descendant at random; to allowing the umbilical cord of a baby to fall to the ground; to adultery; or to witchcraft. Miscarriage is thought to be due to an injured spirit shaking the womb of the pregnant woman so that the baby falls out; when it occurs all the women of the matrilineage must be treated with medicine. Death in childbirth is due to the adultery of the mother herself.

The Cultural Setting

576 Bemba ideal behaviour is that of the *mwina umusumba* or man living at the court, as distinct from the *mwina impanga* or inhabitant of the bush; the country bumpkin.

577 565 A commoner is expected to be loyal to the death to his chief, and to accept the fact that his rulers have the right to all his time and all his possessions. He must be silent and respectful. Members of the crocodile clan are expected to be arrogant and even ruthless, but they must be generous in feeding their adherents.

888 561 Extreme deference is paid to age. Each child knows his exact position of seniority in a group of village children and is given precedence in games. Each group of men sitting in the village shelter does the same. A younger child is scolded for putting itself forward before its elders.

562 622 Bemba women share many of these ideals. They work for their chief in his gardens and make the same abject obeisance to him. They have a lively interest in the ritual centred in the court. They play an important part in attracting followers and kinsmen to a village. A headman's following or 'crowd' (*bumba*) is attracted by means of beer, good entertainment and company, and these depend both on the successful organization of labour, which is largely a man's job, and on the wise and tactful distribution of food, and happy personal relations, which are mainly in the women's sphere.

562 842 888 Women, unlike men, are admired for industry and for resource in finding food in the bush. They are honoured for bearing and rearing many children and for courage in childbirth which is often, under Bemba conditions, a terrible ordeal. They are expected to be loyal to their own sex and to accept the domination of older women.

562 644 622 In the sphere of tribal life women have an important part to play, or rather one that is thought to be important. As we saw, two senior princesses have districts of their own; and junior princesses often act as village 'headmen'. In all these cases they wield political authority but are regarded as chiefs with feminine attributes, that is to say, with more gentleness and hospitality to the needy. They are not expected to be ruthless in discipline. They have male counsellors to advise and support them. Besides these real political functions the senior women have important ritual duties since, like their 'brothers', they are in charge of

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The Ceremony

881 606 372 This was received with shocked protest, 'No, this isn't just ordinary fire. Alas, Mother! We can't use matches.' It seemed an impasse.

At last, to the intense relief of everyone, the wood shaving set to catch the sparks began to smoke and a little flame flickered up. Clapping broke out and cries of 'ulla! ulla!' saluted the new fire. It was a curiously moving moment because of the tenseness of the women packed tight on the floor of the hut through the long wait.

The rite is described shortly as 'to beg for parenthood' (*ukulomba ubufyashi*). The father's sister plays the leading part in [842] the ceremony and it is she who by tradition influences the fertility of the girl. 'The sticks must be rubbed on the back of the father's sister so that the girl will bear a child quickly.'

881 825 372 (As we have seen the lion is equated throughout this ceremony with the bridegroom, the chief, or the male principle. Two women when questioned about the song (No. 19) just said, 'The lion is a chief.' Fire is also equated with generation. The girl owes parenthood to the older women who have made fire for her, 'We say to the girl "We women have made your fire for you. We are in pain now. Our hands ache from the rubbing. You must take over now".')[1]

881 372 Twigs and sticks were deftly built round the young flame and a considerable fire began to crackle. Nangoshye crawled towards it on all fours with a water pot on her head. The two girls crawled behind her clasping their arms round her waist. All three lowered the water pot on to the fire with hands and teeth. I have no recorded comments on this part of the rite. I think it almost certainly symbolizes the heating of the marriage pot of the girl which is stood on the fire by an old woman with the bridegroom and bride clasping her waist. It may also signify the handing over of the fire from the old to the young as suggested in the comment above.

881 The seeds in the winnowing basket were now divided out so that each woman had a handful to cook. The remains were thrown into the big pot over the fire, the pot of the *namushimwa*. We all retired exhausted to our own quarters to eat for the first time since morning.

[834] [1] A.C. adds: 'You cannot beg fire from a woman in a different sexual condition. The girl must have a new fire after her chisungu. She must not have intercourse during menstruation.'

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The Interpretation of the Ceremony

881 It is difficult to separate this aspect of the ceremony from the
789 other acts that compose it since the whole chisungu is thought to
841 contribute to this end, but the theme of the removal of danger is seen in a number of isolated songs and mimes. In one of the first songs, the danger is described as a stone that falls off the girls. The menstrual blood is represented throughout by the colour red on pottery emblems and house designs, by the red cam wood enclosed in the emblem bundles, or the light of the torch glowing red inside the model of the star (see Appendix C).

The blood is removed by whitening. One of the designs on the hut wall is known by the archaic term for whitewash. The girls themselves are painted white like the egret and they are likened to beautiful white birds. The egret is modelled as a clay *mbusa* to be given to the candidates on the last night.

Red cam wood is also used as a sign of safe return from battle. The candidates and the main actors in the ceremony were daubed with the crimson powder on four occasions—after the first jump over the faggots; on the seventh day after the first woodland ceremony; after the whitening magic; and on the last day when the symbolic lion is brought back dead to the village. The girls and their families have done something fearful and they have succeeded. They have been through danger and have escaped. The culture teaches terror of menstrual blood. The chisungu provides the means of safety. It is magic of protection which can only be secured, like other forms of magic help, by carrying out prescribed acts and by paying penalties or dues to those in possession of the secret, in this case the *nacimbusa*. It is also a series of representations or mimes depicting safety and giving a sign that safety has been reached.

881 The magic of fertility is also clearly another of the elements in
789 the chisungu ritual. The whole ceremony makes the girl nubile and
● 842 thus potentially fertile, but different acts are more specifically described as reproducing the sex act. They call to mind the fish which is a fertile animal and lays many eggs. One of the hut drawings also depicts a fish. The *musuku* tree is associated with fertility and is honoured in the first woodland rite. The gardening mimes are carried out at its roots. The mock bridegrooms appear with leaf horns on their heads like the witchdoctors who possess fertility magic. A snake is said to be hidden in the roof of the hut.

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Expressed Purposes of the Chisungu

The ritual lighting of the girl's fire by the father's sister was described as 'begging for parenthood'. Later a branch of the *mupundu* tree, from which women gather fruit, is stuck in the roof of the initiation huts in order to make the girls equally fruitful. Two of the wall designs represent beans which are commonly symbols of fertility. One of the hut designs represents the girl's bed. In the second woodland ceremony the *mwenge*, the woman's tree, is honoured, and beer poured on its roots. One of its branches crossed with the male tree, the *mulombwa*, forms the hoop over which the girls must jump.

It is difficult to be certain how far human fertility is associated with agricultural fertility in these rites. I was never specifically told that the garden mimes were done to make the gardens yield, but merely to 'teach the girls to garden', but it would certainly be hard to distinguish very clearly between the productivity of the girls and the productivity of the seeds they sow in rites which involve the constant handling of seeds of different kinds.

To conclude I believe that the women in charge of this ceremony were convinced that they were causing supernatural changes to take place in the girls under their care, as well as marking those changes. They were changing an alarming condition to a safe one, and securing the transition from a calm but unproductive girlhood to a potentially dangerous but fertile womanhood. They were making the girls grow as well as teaching them. Hence I feel justified in speaking on the 'magic' aspects of the rite.

(*b*) *The teaching of the girls* (*ukufunda*). As we have seen, Bemba women explain that they are teaching the candidates during the chisungu ceremony. They say with great emphasis and characteristic repetition 'We teach and teach and teach the girls' and they sometimes add 'We make them clever' using the causative form of the verb 'to be intelligent and socially competent and to have a knowledge of etiquette', (*ukubacenjela*).

The educational function of puberty ritual has often been stressed by anthropologists and lectures on primitive education were formerly largely concerned with accounts of initiation schools, sometimes described as 'the only formal education' received by the primitive child. Most of the accounts of girls'

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these conditions fixed there is a wide range of possible wants that can be voiced, meeting the need of the moment or of the group or the person concerned. These are rites of supplication in which the Bemba voice their needs and try to persuade themselves that they will be fulfilled.

In the chisungu however the women do not voice new desires, but always those that have existed in the past. The rites consist of an intricate succession of acts the value of which lies in more or less exact repetition. The *mbusa* must be made in the same way and the pottery models on the floor cannot be altered. These are rites which represent and proclaim the established rather than ones which enable the performers to meet new needs. The mimes and emblems of these initiation rites form a charter for the transfer of roles that have to be constantly assumed in each generation. They do not grant the men or women who perform them any help in the present troubles of Bemba married life, such as the prolonged absence of men from the tribal areas or the growing divorce rate. There is no element in them of supplication or prayer. It is for this reason that the chisungu must be reckoned as a rite of maintenance of tribal traditions.

To turn again to the chart it will be seen that all the major rituals of the Bemba reflect the importance they attach to fertility and the supply of food. The chisungu is more closely concerned with fertility than rites of supplication performed by chiefs, yet I never heard a prayer uttered by a chief which did not contain a special appeal to the ancestors for parenthood (*bufyashi*). The cycle of agricultural ceremonies is one of the most important tasks the chiefs are responsible for. The links between the three sets of rites are here close.

It is not easy to account for the tremendous emphasis on fertility and the care of children in Bemba culture. The desire is likely to be strong in all societies where social structure is largely based on descent and groups can only be enlarged by the birth of new children. There are, however, many African tribes with similar social structures in which the emphasis on fertility does not seem to be ritualized in this pronounced way. But it must be remembered that in Bemba culture the lack of any permanent form of possessions makes rights over labour—here rights over the

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labour of the younger generation—of particular importance. There may also be a correlation between fertility rites and matrilineal descent and in fact such a correlation seems to hold good in Central Africa (see Appendix A). Bemba believe that the child is entirely formed from the physical contribution of the mother and not the father, and similar beliefs may hold in the other matrilineal tribes in the area. It is moreover common to find in primitive society that the woman is regarded as solely responsible for the failure of a couple to produce children. Impotence in man is recognized but not sterility. In patrilineal Bantu societies it is common practice for the man's agnatic kinsmen to provide bridewealth for him to secure him a wife. If she proves barren the cattle or other objects are commonly returned or another girl provided from the same lineage group. In a matrilineal society of the Bemba type the situation is rather different. The children of a marriage belong legally to the girl's family and it is to their gain if she produces children. This fact may account for the great care and attention given to fertility rites for girls among such people. The correlation of matrilineal descent with an emphasis on fertility is a hypothesis which will have to be tested more carefully in other areas. It would, of course be possible to relate the high infantile mortality rate that exists among the Bemba to their desire for children and their anxiety over them. This is in fact what many Bemba do. I have for instance been told in answer to a challenging question of mine about the protective rites performed for children. 'Well! Just look what a lot of our children die'. However, high infantile mortality rates are too common in Bantu society for this to be more than a contributory cause to the desire for fertility.

The salient features of Bemba social structure are also reflected in this ritual. The characteristic attitudes to authority in this very hierarchical society are expressed in ceremonies by which chiefs are created and maintained in their supernatural powers, and in those economic and other ceremonies performed by the chiefs themselves. The chisungu is not specially concerned with political life although some of the pottery emblems 'teach' the girl to honour the chiefs.

However, the hierarchy based on age, which is also characteristic of every type of structured relationship among the Bemba, is

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much more comparative information is needed before adequate ones can be given.

Another apparent paradox is the contrast between the position of the bridegroom in daily life, and the role in which he is depicted in the chisungu. In village affairs he must be submissive and quiet, as befits a stranger. He works under the orders of his in-laws and only gradually wins his position as head of his own family. In the chisungu he appears as a roaring lion, a lion-killer, a crocodile, a hunter, a warrior and a chief. The bridegroom in a matrilineal society of the Bemba type is honoured as a *genitor*, not as a *pater*. The bride belongs to her own matrilineage and the bridegroom is allowed access to her to make her fertile. He is welcomed in the village as a procreator, and honoured as such.[1] The bride's family is indebted to the bridegroom for 'the gift of a child'. In the chisungu rite it is the bridegroom's sister who 'begs for parenthood'. The virility of the bridegroom is emphasized throughout the rite, and the marriage ceremony which follows is a test of his procreative powers; he must give a sign of his potency by throwing a burning brand out of the house on his marriage night. The chastity of the girl is not praised either in the chisungu or the marriage ceremonies. It is sociologically irrelevant in societies of this type.

We might expect to find some kind of association between this kind of matrilineal organization and ritual stresses on fertility, such as tests of the virility of the man or a ritual marking of the first conception. I think evidence for it exists. Among the Fort Jameson Cewa the virility of the man is tested by a fire-lighting ordeal in the bush. If the fire lights, the man is known to be potent. The Nyanja give ritual stress to the conception of the first, sometimes the second, child of a union. The Yao sacralize puberty. Yao puberty rites lead to a marriage ceremony, and marriage ceremonies are followed by a celebration of the birth of the first child of the union. An obsolete Yao rite apparently honoured the virility of the man after his wife had been found to be pregnant. It seems possible that the Bemba ceremony of 'taking the child' is a

[1] Yao informants told Clyde Mitchell that a son-in-law was just like a rooster who comes into the yard to fertilize the hens but never owns them. Bemba fathers have more extensive powers than Yao fathers but they are depicted in the same light in proverbs and folk-tales.

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similar solemnization of the fertility of a union. (See Appendix A.)

If a Bemba husband fails to give his wife a child, his marriage comes to an end. If he makes her pregnant, but she dies in childbirth, he will be held responsible by the heads of her matrilineage and by her father and mother. He is said to have 'killed' their child.[1] On the other hand, if he succeeds in the hazardous enterprise of Bemba marriage, he 'founds a house' and acquires not only status but rights of approach to his own matrilineal ancestors.

The honouring of the son-in-law in the chisungu also enacts the desire of the womenfolk to attract a young man to make his home in their village. There may be more in the chisungu mimes than this. It is at least possible that the women had an unconscious sense of guilt about robbing fathers of their children, children who are so much wanted and which only men can give. Bemba girls are brought up in a male-dominated society and are taught to kneel to men and to put them first. Their fathers are respected autocrats in the home, but are dethroned as their children grow up and realise that ultimate power lies with their mothers' brothers. The women court men to give them children, but they do not allow them the full rights of a sociological father or *pater*. They deny him ultimate power over his children; perhaps they compensate him by giving him exaggerated respect in the chisungu as the procreating male.[2]

Sex hostility is not apparent in the chisungu. There are songs which can be interpreted as mocking at men but I did not hear them sung, and they do not seem to be an integral part of the ceremony. The women certainly stress their complete command over matters concerning childbirth. The mother of the girl, her father's sister, and the mother of the boy unite in this respect: this sex grouping cuts across those based on lines of descent. The secrecy of the chisungu may be women's compensation for their seclusion from other aspects of tribal life. But there is nothing to

[1] When a Princess was safely delivered of a child in the old days, the friends of her lover did the dance for a lion-killer returned from the hunt and shouted 'He is saved! He is saved!'

[2] D. Schneider reminds me that according to psycho-analytical theory the penis of the man is equated with his child. He suggests that the Bemba father is robbed of his child but compensated by the symbolic representation of his virility in the chisungu.

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match the ritual hostility between the sexes shown in some other initiation or marriage rites.[1]

Traces of hostility are revealed in the man's attitude to the chisungu. At least one Bemba man told me that unless the rites were performed 'our wives will hate us and give us no respect'. I have also heard remarks from women which seem to show that they are anxious lest they alienate the husbands attracted to the matrilineage. For instance, girls are instructed not to cry out in childbirth 'because it is a thing of shame. These are the secret things of women. Because the man will hear and will say "It is I who gave her that belly. I am ashamed because other women don't cry out like that".'

To conclude, Bemba evidence supports the suggestion that there is a connection between matriliny and girls' initiation ceremonies which emphasize the importance of fertility. In any society in which it is believed that women provide all the physical substance from which the foetus is formed, this would be natural; it is the case in Bemba society. Moreover, the connection between matriliny and girls' initiation ceremonies has been observed in a number of other African communities.[2]

I have suggested that there are also other possible associations, between matriliny characterized by absence of marriage payment, for instance, and instability of marriage with anxieties and taboos centring round the beginning of married life. A further association is suggested between matriliny combined with uxorilocal marriage, and initial inferiority of the young husband combined with compensating honours given him in the rituals of marriage or initiation. I have also suggested, very tentatively indeed, that in this particular matrilineal society there may be a connection between the lack of open hostility between the sexes and an unconscious feeling of guilt at robbing the man of his children, which is expressed in fears on the part of the women that the men will leave them, and on the part of the men that their wives will not respect them unless taught to do so by the chisungu.

[1] Cf. M. Gluckman, 'The role of the sexes in the Wiko circumcision ceremonies', in *Social Structure* edited by M. Fortes, 1949, and P. Mayer, 'Privileged obstruction of marriage rites among the Gusii', in a paper read to the Royal Anthropological Institute, 1950.

[2] See Appendix A for a further discussion on this point.

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mbusa. It is also a passage concealed from the outside world as the girls are concealed from the eyes of the rest of the community under the blankets. Monkeys are represented throughout the chisungu as being enterprising in thefts, usually for the sake of the family.

The immediate interpretation given was that the song meant the hiding of the girls from the village; and that the crawling was meant to make them look ridiculous. I. A. Nkonde gives:

'How shall we go into the ceremony? Shall we enter like monkeys that crawl in in stealth? Thus we show we are forsaking the normal way of life. But we have to go through dark and difficult places before we get wisdom.'

Kasonde says:

'How shall we enter in? We shall enter exposing our buttocks like monkeys.

We are free in the house.

There is nothing secret to us.'

No. 2. Setting the Fish Traps. Sung while making imitation fish traps out of leaves (p. 65):

Ubwamba bwali bwandi!	Here is my fishing weir!
Ndetabataba no mono.	I am bustling about to set a fish trap in it.

Interpretation. Ubwamba is a fishing dyke built in mud across a backwater. The *mono* is the conical fish trap set in it. *Bwamba* also means nakedness and hence is used as an euphemism for the sex organs. The leaf cups with which the women pretend to catch each others' fingers apparently represent the fish-traps and also the vagina of the woman. Fish appear as symbols of fertility throughout the ceremony and the women mention this in immediate explanation of the relation to the words of the song, i.e. 'The mother says, "The girl was my responsibility, but I cannot teach her everything. I have tried to do so up to now but I have failed and therefore now I have to entrust her to the *nacimbusa* to carry out the ceremony for her. If she refuses it means there is no hope for my girl".'

No. 3. The Chisungu falls off. Sung after the girls have made their first jump over a faggot bundle and are carried back to the village (p. 66):

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Appendix B

*881 533 No. 17. *The bridegroom's gift.* When looking for *mbusa* in the covered baskets the women sang:

[539] *Wakunkupukwila;* You have uncovered it,
Mwalye nsomo lye. You have eaten the whole *nsomo.*

Interpretation. The *nsomo* was the bridegroom's gift. It refers to the gifts of food given ceremonially to the bridegroom during the different stages of the marriage ceremony. These dishes have small gifts placed on top and the food must be distributed and not eaten.

No. 18. *The girls' invitation.* The girls distribute the cooked food to their fellows and sing:

[539] *Fisabo fyesu fyapwa;* The food from our gardens is finished up;
Pokeni bamayo. Help yourselves, mothers.

Interpretation. This is the song that goes with the rite that makes the girl free to garden. The women said: 'Now we have danced the child as a gardener. She must start to cultivate herself now.'

No. 19. *Begging for fire.* This is an important song sung as the women rubbed the fire-sticks in a frenzied effort to produce sparks (p. 76):

[539] *Twaisa kulonda mulilo* We have come to beg for fire.
Nkalamo twapapata. Lion, we beg it of you.

No. 20. They also sang:

Shi ishiki! Scratch! Scratch! (The operating of the fire-sticks)

Uafyala banga? How many children have you borne?

[604 842] *Interpretation.* The sticks are rubbed on the back of the girl's father's sister who can give or withhold parenthood. The girl is told that she owes fire to the older woman whose hands ache from the rubbing. She must take over now. She must take her turn at the bearing of children now. The lion is the bridegroom, the chief, or the male principle throughout the ceremony. The bridegroom is

643 At state functions the Kazembe appeared sitting on a stool placed upon
292 lion-skins. He was shaded by a canopy of umbrellas made of coarse native
293 cotton fabric(1) and wore an elaborate head-dress of scarlet and yellow
534 feathers, the *nuconzo* cloth adorned with bead and cowrie ornaments, the
535 *insipo* girdle of hide,(2) and the *lukano* armband, emblem of his office.(3)
His notables and musicians sat nearby. Ceremonial dancing was performed
to the accompaniment of music.(4) Musical instruments(5) were *marimba*(6)
(a sort of xylophone), *chincufo*(7) (a basso drum), *imbirebire* (big conical
drum with cowhide or an elephant's ear stretched over the open end), *gomati*
(two pieces of iron connected by a curved rod). The *mondo*,(8) a hollow
wooden cylinder beated with drumsticks, was used to convey messages by means
of varying combinations of beats. The big sacred *chambancua* drum,(9) rest-
ing on a lion's skin in Kazembe's palace, was only brought out in wartime to
accompany the armies.

521 Clan and tribal history and family genealogies are favourite subjects
526 of discussion at beer-drinking parties. District and village rivalry now
finds expression in football matches.

BIRTH, MARRIAGE, DEATH

842 The male alone was thought to be instrumental in begetting children.
847 Babies who cut their upper teeth first were destroyed as bearers of bad
luck.(9) An infant is usually given the name of one of its dead ancestors
551 on either the paternal or maternal side; this gives some indication of an-
cestry. Chinyanta, Lukwesa, Ilunga, Muonga, are characteristic Lunda
names.

582 The effective exogamous unit is the *cikota*. Preferential marriage is
with the *mufyala*, a person whose father is a fellow-clansman of one's mother
or conversely, and particularly with father's sister's daughter. A network
of affinal relationships thus develops between villages. In general there
are no definite preferences leading to marriages between certain clans, but
583 traditional reputations attaching to clans may cause their members to be
591 regarded as desirable or undesirable marriage partners. Marriage payments
are low. Both matrilocal and patrilocal marriages occur, but for the first
few years marriage is usually matrilocal so that the husband can "get
accustomed". He puts up a temporary hut in the *citente* of his parents-in-
law and becomes a member of their extended family. Later the couple are at
liberty to move. Often the parents of both spouses live in the same
595 village. Lunda marriages tend to be patrilocal. Polygyny is not frequent.
The second wife is usually inherited, e.g. she may be one's elder brother's
widow. A man may marry a younger sister of his wife but not an elder sis-
ter, since she is called *nayofyala*, "mother-in-law".

744 The dead are buried in the bush. A *mvali* (see p.86 above) of the de-
ceased takes part in the ceremony. To divert the thoughts of the partici-

(1) Burton, p.254.
(2) Valdez, II, pp.217-8; cf. Livingstone, I, pp.262-3; Burton, p.42; Bowdich, p.91
(3) Burton, p.253. (4) Valdez, II, p.227; Burton, p.114.
(5) Valdez, op.cit., pp.222-4; Livingstone, I, p.305.
(6) Burton, p.112; Valdez, op.cit., p.255.
(7) Cavazzi, I, p.343. (8) ibid., pp.342-3.
(9) ibid., pp.331-2. (10) Livingstone, I, p.276.

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642 based on descent in nearly every case. Chieftainships were limited
554 to one clan, as we have seen; some of the councillorships (i.e. the
bakabilo) are confined to a few of the older clans; and head-
565 manships, though they may be won through the chiefs favour, tend to become hereditary in their turn. All priestly offices are hereditary without exception, as is natural where an ancestral cult of this type is practised. Magico-economic specialists, particularly those in charge of fishing villages, usually acquire their powers by descent also, as do some of the doctors and diviners (*yanga*). In each case the supernatural powers almost invariably correlated with political authority in this area are conferred by a rite, of great complexity, in the case of the succession of a chief, known as *ukupyanika*. For these reasons it is essential to study the dogma of descent by which these powers are believed to be transferred from one generation to another, and the legal rules of succession by which status and office are passed from one man to another.

611 (*a*) *The Dogma of Descent*. By dogma of descent I mean, first,
● 842 those theories of procreation[1] which express a people's beliefs as to the physical contribution of the father and mother to the formation of the child, and hence the traditional conception of the physical continuity between one generation and the next; and next their beliefs as to the influence of the dead members of each social group over the living, and hence the social identification[2] of a man with the line of his dead ancestors.

593 Among the Bemba it is believed that a child is made from the
611 blood of a woman which she is able to transmit to her male and
842 female children. A man can possess this blood in his veins, but cannot pass it on to his children, who belong to a different clan. Physiological paternity is recognized. Children are often described as being like their fathers, and are expected to give the latter affection and respect although they have no legal obligations to them under the matrilineal system. 'We take our fathers' presents because they begot us,' they say. But it is nevertheless the physical

[1] This term was first introduced by Malinowski, who showed how the rules of matrilineal descent among the Trobriand islanders are buttressed by beliefs that the father makes no physical contribution to the birth of his child. Similar material published by Rattray from the Ashanti area shows a belief in a double contribution of blood from the mother and spirit from the father correlated with a bilateral emphasis o[illegible]cent.

[2] To use a term employed [illegible] a very stimulating manner by Radcliffe Browne.

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continuity of the mother's line of ancestors which is the basis of legal identification with her descent group.[1] A royal princess might even produce an heir by a slave father in the old days without lowering her child's prestige. The relationship between brother and sister, which is a very close one, legally and ritually, is based on the fact that the two were born from one womb, and in the case of the royal family it appears to be equally strong when the two are children of different fathers. These theories of procreation account, not only for the matrilineal descent of the Bemba, on which succession to chieftainship is based, but also for the rank accorded to the royal princesses as mothers of chiefs, and the headmanships and other positions of authority given them.

The Bemba dogma as to the influence of the dead over the living is also of the utmost importance as a basis for political authority. The spirit of a dead man (*umupashi*, plur. *imipashi*) is thought to survive as a guardian presence associated with the land or village site formerly inhabited, and as a spiritual protector of different individuals born in the same lineage group and called by the same name. The *imipashi* of dead chiefs become tutelary deities of the land they ruled over, and responsible for its fertility and the welfare of its inhabitants. They can be approached by the successor to the chieftainship at various sacred spots in the territory and at the sacred relic shrines (*babenye*) in his own village. A chief is said to be powerful because he 'has great *imipashi*!' It is for this reason he is described as the *umwine calo*, 'owner of the land', and it is important to note that in every case the most important *imipashi* and the most sacred relics are those of the first chiefs to enter the land, or the first occupants of a chieftainship.

This dogma as to the influence of the dead over the living inhabitants of a district, or the members of a descent group, is very similar to the general Bantu pattern. But the Bemba belief in the social identification between the dead man and his appointed successor seems to me to be particularly complete. It is the basis of the belief as to the supernatural influence exerted by the chief in his own person as distinct from his direct approach to the spirits

[1] The patrilineal tribes on the Nyassaland border consider the Bemba theory of procreation as entirely ridiculous. One Ngoni expressed his contempt, thus: 'If I have a bag and put money in it, the money belongs to me and not to the bag. But the Bemba say a man puts semen into a woman and yet the child belongs to her and not to him!'